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BROTHERS 12-14 PS

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WITI RELEASE 222A

BY GERALD MCCULLOUGH

PHOENIXVILLE, PA. (UPI)--HIS TWO BROTHERS DESCRIBED RICHARD FECTEAU, RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY BY CHINA EARLIER THIS WEEK, AS "HAPPY, BUT SOMEWHAT CONFUSED" WHEN THEY VISITED HIM ON TUESDAY.

BUT FECTEAU'S TWIN, PHILLIP, 44, AND OTHER BROTHER BERT, 47, REFUSED COMMENT ON REPORTS THAT RICHARD WAS ON A SPY MISSION FOR THE UNITED STATES WHEN HE WAS CAPTURED BY CHINESE COMMUNISTS 19 YEARS AGO.

PHILLIP, A DRAFTSMAN FROM PEABODY, MASS., AND BERT, AN ASSISTANT HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FROM AMESBURY, MASS., VISITED RICHARD, 44, AND MARY ANN HARBERT, 26, OF PALO ALTO, CALIF., AT THE VALLEY FORGE ARMY HOSPITAL.

THEIR BROTHER AND MISS HARBERT WERE FREED BY THE CHINESE SUNDAY.

THE BROTHERS SAID BOTH EX-CAPTIVES REJECTED THE HOSPITAL'S STANDARD MENU OF CHINESE PEPPER STEAK AND RICE, PREFERRING TO DINE ON HAMBURGERS, FRENCH FRILLS, CHERRY PIE AND MILK.

"IT WAS A 36-HOUR TRIP FROM PEKING HOME," SAID BERT. "HE'S EXHAUSTED. HE'S HAPPY, BUT SOMEWHAT CONFUSED."

THE BROTHERS SAID THEY TALKED LOOSELY ABOUT CURRENT EVENTS, THE CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURED IN FECTEAU'S HOMETOWN OF LYNN, MASS., AND ABOUT FECTEAU'S YOUNGER BROTHER, ROBERT, WHO LIVES IN LYNN.

ASKED ABOUT PUBLISHED REPORTS THAT FECTEAU WAS ON A SPY MISSION WHEN HE AND JOHN T. DOWNEY, 41, OF NEW BRITAIN, CONN., WERE CAPTURED, THE BROTHERS SAID, "WE HAVE NO COMMENT ON THAT. WE DIDN'T DISCUSS IT WITH HIM."

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DOWNEY IS STILL BEING HELD BY CHINA.

BUT THE BROTHERS QUOTED FECTEAU AS SAYING HE SPENT THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, AN INTERIM PERIOD WITH A CHINESE CELLMATE, AND WAS RETURNED TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT JUST BEFORE HIS RELEASE. THEY QUOTED HIM AS SAYING THE WINTERS WERE "VERY COLD" IN CHINA.

THE BROTHERS ALSO INSISTED FECTEAU WAS NOT BEING KEPT AT THE HOSPITAL FOR A GOVERNMENT DEBRIEFING, ALTHOUGH ALAN ROMBERG, A U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL FOR CHINESE AFFAIRS, SEEMED TO BE IN CHARGE. THEY ALSO SAID THEIR BROTHER WOULD NOT MEET WITH NEWSPER.

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